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Community Conservation and Protected Area Management With a Gender Perspective: A Synthesis

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A multi-institutional meeting on gender issues in protected area management was held in Washington, D.C., in September 2000. The objectives of the meeting were to advance the conceptual thinking, discuss lessons learned, and determine future steps concerning community conservation with a gender perspective. The Nature Conservancy and WIDTECH sponsored the meeting in collaboration with the Washington, D.C.-based Community Conservation Coalition.

This information bulletin synthesizes the major results and ideas generated at the meeting with the purpose of informing the conservation community, government agencies, donors, and others interested in environment programs with a gender perspective.

The results of this meeting, and four other preparatory meetings held in Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador, also shaped the agenda for an international forum in Ecuador in March 2001, "Conserving Biodiversity from the Andes to the Amazon: Community Conservation with a Gender Perspective."

Conservation organizations have long relied primarily on the biological sciences to frame protected area management and conservation planning. Increasingly, these organizations are recognizing the importance of integrating a human dimension into the practice of conservation and ecosystem management. Many see biodiversity conservation as a social process and gender as one of the critical social variables in this process.

Attention to gender is evident within international conservation groups (World Wildlife Fund, World Conservation Union [IUCN], The Nature Conservancy, and Conservation International) and donor organizations (the MacArthur and Ford Foundations), which are increasingly staffed with professionals experienced in gender. There is inter-institutional collaboration on conservation with a gender perspective through regional networks such as Managing Ecosystems with a Gender Emphasis (MERGE) and African Women Leaders for Agriculture and the Environment (AWLAE). The Local Participation in the Management of Protected Areas (PALOMAP), Ecology, Community Organization, and Gender (ECOGEN), and WIDTECH projects are providing technical assistance, training, and research support globally. The Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) now has both a gender and diversity program and a system-wide program on participatory research and gender analysis.

In addition to this critical mass of people focused on gender in biodiversity conservation, more interest is being focused on the interconnections between population dynamics, conservation, and gender as reflected in the activities of the Washington, D.C.-based Community Conservation Coalition and the University of Michigan's Population and Environment

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Program. On a worldwide level, there is greater focus on such conservation issues as gender and land tenure, as well as the involvement of local men and women in community management plans.

A Framework for Community Conservation and Gender

Practitioners of community conservation work in collaboration with community stakeholders using participatory methods to facilitate local decision making and to provide technical assistance and training. This approach respects the needs, values, and traditions of communities, and emphasizes equity and transparency. It also calls for understanding the dynamics of cultural and ethnic diversity, and recognizing the importance of the inclusion of a gender perspective in natural resource management.

A community-based approach to conservation builds on the vital roles women and men play in understanding and managing the environment that surrounds them in both rural and urban settings. The approach:

- Encourages environmental decision making, leadership, and participation of both men and women within civil society so that they can better serve as advocates for environmental issues of concern to them, their families, and their communities;

- Develops strategies for conservation and resource management based on democratic principles, participatory techniques, and an understanding of how gender shapes access to, participation in, and definition of collective activities affecting the environment; and

- Addresses specifically the economic, social, institutional, policy, and legal constraints to effective management of natural resources by men and women.

Within this context, gender is a crosscutting variable that draws attention to age, ethnicity, class, and other social factors, and increases our knowledge of the human dimension of natural resource management and conservation.

Dianne Rocheleau, professor of geography at Clark University, led a discussion on four concepts useful for community conservation practitioners in working with gender in and around protected areas.

Gendered Knowledge

There is great power in defining, labeling, and creating knowledge. Who decides what knowledge is used? Who creates knowledge? For conservation planners recognizing the different "knowledges" is critical in their understanding their own knowledge systems and those of the communities with which they work:

- Scientific and indigenous knowledge;
- Outside planner and community knowledge;
- Women's and men's knowledge;
- Knowledge of the elderly and of the young; and
- Invisible and visible knowledge.

Gendered knowledge includes the ways women and men learn, what they learn, and how they use what they learn in relationship to the environment around them. Such knowledge may be hidden by stereotypes. Women who live near protected areas often are defined by themselves, their families, protected area staff, and others as "housewives," which masks their experience with the natural world. It is important for conservationists to deconstruct these sterotyped terms so that they can understand how women interact with natural resources.

Gendered knowledge varies by class, race, age, and ethnicity, underscoring its complexity. An older woman from an indigenous group may work with land and forests in different ways than a younger woman living outside native communities. Practitioners of applied conservation need to recognize community complexity by choosing to work with diverse populations and by questioning assumptions made about community groups—men, women, youth, the elderly, the poor, and ethnic or religious groups. In particular, it is important to question why conserva-

tionists place these groups of people in certain conceptual "boxes" and to be aware of the impact this has on their approach to community-based conservation.

Knowledge is shared horizontally, through peer exchanges and within families, and vertically, through local, regional, national, and international sources. Traditionally, conservation staff are trained to access vertical knowledge. Horizontal knowledge within communities often is more difficult to access for conservation personnel, who may be outsiders. Gendered information is often a part of horizontal knowledge. Participatory methods—social mapping, focus groups, and peer interviews—are techniques that increasingly are used by community conservation personnel to tap horizontal knowledge and make it visible.

Gendered Rights and Responsibilities

Gendered rights and responsibilities and the power relations between men and women often affect women's access to natural resources and curtail women's ability to provide for themselves and their families. Dianne Rocheleau noted that many women in the Dominican Republic, despite their desire to do so, could not plant acacia and other timber trees on household lands because they did not have clear tenure rights. Even in areas near the house where women control the space, legal tenure rights are often lacking, limiting women's decision-making power over planting. For conservationists, this suggests a need to understand local cultural and legal contexts so that projects can be more efficient and avoid unintended and inequitable results.

Gendered rights and responsibilities with regard to natural resources need to be viewed within a broad framework of democratic principles. Within this framework, rights come with responsibilities and responsibilities come with rights. Women may be given responsibilities but no rights. They may have the responsibility for providing water for their families but without the decision-making powers to control the rights to water. Within protected areas, there is a need to look at the rights and responsibilities of both men and women with regard to natural resources. Certainly before the establishment of a park, there is a need to have a complete picture of gendered rights and responsibilities to land and other resources.

Gender analysis of environmental laws helps clarify whose rights and responsibilities the laws ensure. Environmental lawyers, biologists, and economists benefit from a dialogue about rights and responsibilities with a gender perspective. Land and property issues, often affecting conservation, depend on both legal and social constructs, often framed by gender. Beyond individual rights and responsibilities are the domains of identity, affinity, reciprocity, and community, all mediated by culture. The potential for complementarity and reciprocity in gendered labor, land, authority, and knowledge in households, families, communities, and states are all mediated by culture, and articulated more in terms of practice and custom than legal frameworks.

Gendered Livelihoods and Landscapes

An examination of gendered livelihoods and landscapes most clearly focuses on space and its use by local communities and households. To understand the complexity within a community, examining men's and women's uses of the landscape can reveal overlapping interests with regard to natural resource management and highlight the fact that an intervention could affect one group differently from another. In El Salvador, in an attempt to conserve the mangroves, restrictions were placed on fishing in the estuaries, and attempts were made to preserve timber and limit firewood use. Most women fish in the estuaries, while the men fish in the open sea. Women's involvement with fishing was not understood, and the restrictions limited their access rights. A vital source of household protein and income had been lost. Women also gather firewood. Individuals continue to fish in the estuary secretly and to gather firewood to use themselves or to sell; project attempts at change did not succeed. (Gammage, 1999:4)

Participatory community mapping can define space and its use within a landscape. Using this technique, local men and women map their access to and control

of resources in agriculture, gardening, forestry, and general natural resource management. Such maps often reflect historic land-use patterns and the logic of these patterns, an invaluable aid to conservation planning when nested within an understanding of ecological zones and realities. Maps, generated either through participatory or low-tech processes or through the use of satellite images and local knowledge overlays, can serve as powerful tools to enhance the participation and decision-making power of stakeholders in the conservation process, including gender-specific stakeholder groups.

Gendered Institutions and Organizations

Understanding "who does what" has been a fundamental goal of gender analysis. However, understanding "who does what" is not the only use of gender analysis. It is equally important in understanding how conservation groups and institutions are organized, how project benefits are distributed, and who has the power and responsibility to define policy and programs.

Within the conservation movement, there are formal and informal organizations and institutions at many levels with different agendas. Most organizations have gendered histories. Some are historically organizations of primarily men or primarily women. Some are historically men's groups with a women's branch or component. In others, men may be the decision makers and executives, and women may be the support staff. Other institutions may emphasize equity among men and women and highlight diversity.

Gender analysis also can be used to examine the institutional view of women within the programs and projects implemented by the organizations. Are women assigned to micro-initiatives? Is the focus on mainstreaming gender? Is the involvement of women and men actively encouraged? Are disaggregated data by sex gathered and analyzed? Are men trained to feel comfortable working with women?

Regional Gender and Conservation Planning

Community conservation has important roles to play at larger geographic and institutional scales beyond its historical concentration at the grassroots level. Issues of migration, population pressures, and socio-political structures are crucial elements for the long-term goal of conservation. Three presentations at the meeting illustrated different uses of social data and data disaggregated by sex to illuminate conservation efforts at the regional scale: migration data (The Nature Conservancy), population information (Population Action International), and a gender assessment of the use of natural resources (World Wildlife Fund).

Jason Bremner of The Nature Conservancy raised the importance of the impact of human migration on conservation. Migration causes important changes in population growth rates, household structures, and gender roles. These demographic dynamics affect natural resource use patterns and have an impact on regional conservation. The gender dimension of migration is illustrated by the skewed gender ratios in the Galapagos because of the influx of seasonal fishermen and a male-dominated tourist industry. It is also illustrated by the changing gender roles in the southern Ecuadorian Andes where women are migrating to more urban areas. The major question is what impact these skewed male-to-female ratios have on conservation. The Nature Conservancy will sponsor a study that will explore in more depth the impact of the skewed sex ratios on conservation in the Galapagos.

There are data sources that can be tapped for gender information related to migration and other social issues:

- National census data (growth rates, gender ratios, migration rates);
- Demographic health surveys or equivalent nationwide surveys (reproductive health, maternal and child health, female education); and

- Participatory rural appraisals (gender roles, reasons for migration, changes in resource use).

Carolyn Vogel, Population Action International, spoke of the "International Conference on Population and Development" held in Cairo in 1994 and its impact on the conservation of biodiversity. At the Cairo conference, the ideology of "population control" was replaced by an emphasis on human rights, human development, and the freedom and capacity to put reproductive decision making into effect. With this new focus, the empowerment of women became of central importance because 75 million fewer girls than boys are in secondary schools, and in most countries women have nowhere near the economic opportunities of men. Also, hundreds of millions of women (and men) have little or no access to services and information that can help them plan pregnancies. The population policy focus shifted from counting numbers of people to understanding the behavior of groups of people, especially women.

The Cairo agenda interacts with conservation in two ways. First, organizations dealing with population issues are working with conservation organizations in the delivery of reproductive health services. Second, the empowerment of women is recognized by conservation groups as a means of reducing population and, therefore, reducing the impact of population growth on the environment. Based on this concept, the Sierra Club, one of the largest conservation groups in the United States, has issued publications on the empowerment of women and the relationship of women's health to the health of the earth.

Kerry MacQuarrie spoke of the attempts of the World Wildlife Fund to integrate gender into its regional conservation planning. The World Wildlife Fund uses ecoregion-based conservation planning to establish conservation priorities. Biodiversity is not equally distributed around the earth, nor is it subject to equally destructive forces. Understanding what needs to be done in each ecoregion requires a series of assessments: a rapid initial reconnaissance, a biological assessment, a biodiversity vision, and a socioeconomic assessment. These assessments help the World Wildlife Fund understand interactions and circumstances today that allow for the determination of present and future pressures and opportunities affecting ecoregions and ecoregional planning.

As a part of this planning process, the World Wildlife Fund has developed a gender assessment tool for ecoregional conservation. The gender assessment is linked to the priority habitats and species as defined by the World Wildlife Fund. These include, for example, coral and coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, marine wetlands, dugongs, turtles, and lobsters. The gender assessment tool is linked to these priorities with a matrix that identifies the habitat (coral reef) and the threats (over-fishing, dredging). The tool then links the threat to men, women, and the habitat, and speculates on the strategic implications of those links. For example, over-fishing the coral reef may be linked to men because they do most of the dynamite fishing. Women fish close to shore whereas men go out to sea. The strategic implications may be to educate men on the dangers of dynamite fishing and to urge decision makers to understand the impact of shallow water fishing on households.

Aside from the matrix, the assessment requests responses on four other dimensions: (a) *Policy*: Does policy affect how men or women use, manage, and control this habitat or species?; (b) *National and international drivers*: Do national or international drivers influence the use of this habitat or species by women and men?; (c*) Trends*: What might be the future trends in the use of this habitat or species by men and women?; d) *Values:* Do either traditional or contemporary values influence the use of this habitat or species by both men and women?

Site Conservation Planning and Gender

A presentation by Constance Campbell, The Nature Conservancy, illustrated how conservation groups can integrate social data into established site conservation planning through stakeholder assessment and situation analysis. The Nature Conservancy traditionally

has used the "Five S" framework for conservation planning—systems, stresses, sources, strategies, and success. "The Five S" paradigm deals almost exclusively with biological assessment. The Nature Conservancy has introduced a sixth "S" for consideration—stakeholder/situation—in an effort to integrate a more holistic perspective into the planning process.

Within the "situation/stakeholder" framework, the human context and stakeholder groups related to conservation targets are identified and analyzed. One tool that is used to assess the "situation" or human context is Venn diagramming, which allows planners to conceptualize relationships between conservation targets, stresses, related human activities, and key stakeholder groups. Maps also inform this social assessment. Ecoregional and national-scale mapping with gender-disaggregated data has proven quite useful in analyzing population trends with significant implications for conservation planning. Examples include mapping the age-dependency ratios for the Sonoran Desert ecoregion (due to an older population with many retirees) and male-to-female ratios for the Dominican Republic (indicating a high outmigration of women from rural areas). A tool used to identify and assess stakeholders is an assessment matrix. The stakeholder assessment addresses the question, "Who is doing what related to conservation targets and what should our strategies do about it?" The matrix also defines the stakeholders according to their sociopolitical influence, the economic benefit they receive from the conservation target, and their direct relationship to the target.

Within the situation analysis and the stakeholder assessment, gender plays an increasingly recognized role. Community mapping requires that both men and women map how they use the environment around them, including the conservation target. Stakeholder assessment requires that stakeholder groups be examined from a gender perspective: Who are the members of the various groups? Are both the formal and informal socio-political influence considered? Who accrues the economic benefits from activities related to the conservation target?

Gender in Conservation Organizations

What are the opportunities and venues in institutions for creating space for the consideration of gender? Lorena Aguilar, IUCN Senior Gender Advisor, framed the discussions by presenting her experience institutionalizing gender in the ministries of the environment within Mesoamerica.

The IUCN Gender Framework

IUCN's approach to gender focuses on equity within the conservation community. The approach views the global environmental crisis in society as requiring innovative ways for humans to relate to nature and the initiation of a process that introduces cultural forms grounded in equity and social justice. Conservation is such an approach. Conservation is seen as a fundamental critique of the mistreatment of nature by humans. Therefore, conservationists promote the value of biological diversity. Similarly, a gender equity perspective recognizes social, individual, and cultural diversity and heterogeneity. Both conservation and gender equity pose a new way of life based on a more integral and holistic view where the interaction of the biological and the social is seen as important.

The IUCN gender framework recognizes that in the new millennium, the international pro-democracy movement favors granting civil society an increasingly active role in governance. Increasing the participation of women within civil society has constituted one of the most important components within the movements supporting democratic liberalization, social justice, and human rights. Public policies, including environmental policies, cannot continue being gender-neutral in light of these global movements. Given this framework, IUCN is opposed to:

- Policies that do not reflect the national and international commitments adopted by participating countries with respect to human rights and gender equity;

- Beliefs that development is the same for everyone, denying the fact that its impact is different based on gender;

- Inequities in the resources allotted to men and women participating in sustainable development activities;
- Structures within institutions that generate inequity and inequality;
- Formulation of policies that have a negative impact on women; and
- Any contribution to the reproduction of gender inequalities.

Implementation of the IUCN Gender Framework

In 1998, there were seven requests to the IUCN from ministers of the environment in Mesoamerica for help in institutionalizing a gender perspective. The decision was made to develop a gender policy for each of the ministries with a supporting action plan. The methodology included five steps: development of guidelines; elaboration of gender policy; approval of policy; national workshops to draft plans of action; and regional collaboration. As a result, each ministry now has a gender policy and a plan of action.

From this experience, IUCN staff learned that the policies and plans of action have to be simple and concrete and the process of elaborating these policies and plans is a valuable training experience. They also learned that the existence of a policy provides a valuable instrument for mainstreaming gender throughout departments and programs. However, policy is not enough. There is a need to give the policy life both internally within the institution and externally within projects and programs.

Another lesson learned is that training is essential, but it must not start with gender. Rather, the initial focus should be on gender issues within specific sectors—for example, protected areas or coastal marine ecosystems. Therefore, social scientists need to learn the language of biologists. What are the gender issues involving frogs, rhinos, and fee-based environmental services? Finally, there is a need to work with the legal departments of conservation organizations, to develop monitoring and evaluation systems with gender indicators, and to establish alliances and networks among those working with community conservation with a gender perspective.

Recommendations

Based on the presentations and discussions, the participants made recommendations on substantive, institutional, and programmatic issues at the conclusion of the meeting:

Substantive Issues

- Consider gender within the context of democratic movements, strengthened civil society, and globalization;
- Convene people and sponsor research to develop strong, thoughtful positions on the gender issues related to conservation trends such as paid environmental services, co-management, and decentralization;
- Revise and adapt the historically biological tools and concepts used in conservation organizations to include attention to socioeconomic and cultural variables;
- Determine the common ground among those working within a development paradigm (people first) and those working within conservation (conservation first); and
- Take into consideration that resource use, living conditions, history, and the needs of women and men differ depending on cultural, economic, political, ideological, and environmental contexts. Women are not a homogeneous group.

Programmatic Issues

- Create and implement policies that mainstream gender analysis as an integral process of conservation programs;

- Foster political will for community conservation programs with a gender perspective through external pressures (donor policies and guidelines) and internal pressures (gender position papers within an organization);
- Coordinate a coalition of partners who can advocate for a gender approach in programs and for the implementation of gender policies already in place;
- Work with the donor community on including gender criteria in requests for proposals; and
- Monitor and evaluate programs to understand how and how much women benefit from project funds and how men benefit.

Institutional Issues

- Promote opportunities for conservation personnel who are specialists in the biological sciences to gain experience in the social sciences and gender, and provide institutional rewards for these efforts;
- Promote opportunities for gender specialists and social scientists working with conservation issues to gain exposure to the biological sciences;
- Foster personnel in key positions within institutions to be advocates for a gender dimension in conservation;
- Provide professional development opportunities for women who are potential leaders in conservation at the grassroots level and within the professions;
- Address the need for gender mainstreaming within institutions while also addressing the need for gender-specialized institutions, departments, and programs;
- Institutionalize gender within the work culture of conservation organizations;
- Operationalize the institutional commitment to gender (i.e., adopt a gender policy, write gender guidelines for sectoral units, allocate funds and resources to the gender focus); and
- Build gender constituencies and networks within institutions and among institutions nationally and internationally.

WIDTECH supports innovative approaches to technical assistance and training that take into account women's roles and contributions and enhance the effectiveness of USAID's development assistance.

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